



**Interview with Fred Kielsgard about Lee Highway Motels
Conducted by D'Anne Evans on January 18, 1987**

[start of transcription]

Evans: [I'm with Fred Kielsgard at] 5315 Ox Road south of Fairfax City in Fairfax County. The date is January the 18th, Sunday, 1987. The interviewer is D'Anne Evans. The subject is Mr. Kielsgard's boyhood home on the Lee Highway and the Lehmann's Tavern and motor courts which were across from his home and his knowledge of the changing nature of Lee Highway during his boyhood years in the [19]20s and the 1930s.

[recording paused]

Evans: What I would like to ask you about first Mr. Kielsgard, where did you live exactly on Lee Highway then?

Kielsgard: Well I lived just about 100–200 yards west of what was later known as Lehmann's Tavern on the south side of Lee Highway.

Evans: Now when you first lived there then it wasn't Lehmann's Tavern?

Kielsgard: Oh, no. No ma'am.

Evans: What was it?

Kielsgard: Uh, gentleman lived there name of Tom Harrison, Thomas Harrison.

Evans: Uh huh, did he own that?

Kielsgard: I think that he did. Yes, ma'am.

Evans: I know I've chased the chain of title, you see and I didn't remember his name he might of rent it from—

Kielsgard: Well, it may have belonged to a daughter. He had a daughter, name of Mrs. Maddox.

Evans: Oh, yeah, that's the name.

Kielsgard: Yeah, well it may have been in her name, I don't know but I know he lived there for quite a number of years.

Evans: Mhmm. And now did Mr. Young tell me that it was at Drover's Rest you said?

Kielsgard: Yes, I was telling him that the other day it was handed down by word of mouth that when people use to take their cattle and sheep into Washington, geese and whatever you know, they would go so far and then stop for the night. Well, that was one of their stopping places. That's what they always told me.

Evans: But it had stopped being that when you were growing up?

Kielsgard: Oh, yes. Yes, ma'am, yes. They had started using— well those hucksters then, my dad was a huckster at the time, I mean they called them hucksters, they'd go up the country with their team of horses and a wagon and buy chickens and eggs and whatever's available. At that time you sold game as well. Rabbits and squirrels. But I guess that's where we made our money growing up as young kids you know? We had set snares and we had the gums and set catch squirrels and rabbits, you know? And then they would also shoot the game and sell on the market.

Evans: Right. When you what— When you caught rabbits and squirrels and you what poisoned them? Or—

Kielsgard: No, no. We would dress them out. We either shoot them or catch them in a snare. We set snares.

Evans: Well did the snare kill them?

Kielsgard: Oh, yes.

Evans: Oh, okay.

Kielsgard: Yes and with the gum, with the what you call it? Gum is actually a rabbit trap.

Evans: Mhmm.

Kielsgard: And that didn't kill them of course. You had to kill them but I mean, then we would dress them out and what they called a gamlet stick in the middle of them. You know to keep the air to them you know and I remember my dad we had

one cooler up there, we had dozens of those in there. I can still see it even now you know? On tables, you know? Ready to take them to market.

Evans: Where was the market then?

Kielsgard: In Washington.

Evans: In Washington, D.C.? Down on Pennsylvania was the Central Market?

Kielsgard: Yes we went across Chain Bridge into Washington.

Evans: So, that was—

Kielsgard: And he would leave at night about 10 o'clock with a team and he would get into Washington by the next morning. They'd have to get in there about 4 o'clock, I think that's when they all set up to sell their wares. By early afternoon or late morning I guess they sold out and they'd start back home again.

Evans: Now what time, what exact era would this be? Is this the late 1920s early 1930s?

Kielsgard: No, this would be— well, when my dad was huckster that was prior to 1920.

Evans: Oh, it was?

Kielsgard: Yes, that was in [19]14, [19]15, [19]16 all up in there in the teens. Now my dad, he was quite an enterprising person. He started the first milk truck line in the area, hauling milk. Cause they had problems with the way they used to load it down Railroad Avenue there and haul it in by railcar. I mean by train. But that wasn't as good a way of getting it in because the farmers had all to bring it down to there, to the railhead there.

Evans: Now that's the electric railroad, the Arlington-Falls Church Railroad Avenue?

Kielsgard: That's right. That's right.

Evans: Okay.

Kielsgard: Well it was right down Railroad Avenue in the City of Fairfax, right near the cemetery—

Evans: That's what I'm thinking.

Kielsgard: Yeah.

Evans: And I know that there was only that electric— what we'd call a trolley car.

Kielsgard: Yeah. Well they also had trains going in there too.

Evans: Trains?

Kielsgard: The trolley car went up to the top of the hill.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: That went up to the top of the hill, right in front of the bank, right in front of the bank, that's where it stopped. And then came back down again. But they also had trains going in from down at the bottom there they hauled ties, they hauled lumber, they hauled various things like that. Those were railroad trains.

Evans: What line was that? The Southern Railroad?

Kielsgard: That was the—

Evans: That goes to Fairfax Station? I mean I'm sort of—

Kielsgard: Oh, I don't know. I can't remember things anymore. (Laughter) I forgot the name of it now. Well let's see, I guess Arlington and Fairfax Railroad— I can't recall just what the name of it there but I'll try to look it up for you. But then my dad also started the first bus line.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: In Virginia. He came out to Fairfax later on he had a route went out to Winchester and one to Luray, I believe. But then the crash of [19]29 came and he lost it all.

Evans: Yeah, that's sad.

Kielsgard: And then we started up, 1927 we started up the feed store, right where the bank parking lot is now.

Evans: Well now how far back now, do you remember, Mr. Kielsgard?

Kielsgard: Well, frankly— well of course, vaguely I remember early [19]20s.

Evans: Okay.

Kielsgard: But I was born in 1915, so you can see I can't remember too far back.

Evans: No, that's—

Kielsgard: But the [19]20s—

Evans: The [19]20s.

Kielsgard: I can remember the [19]20s and the [19]30s.

Evans: And you had a farm now on Lee Highway then?

Kielsgard: Well, dad had about 12 acres there. And when he first moved there about 1910 or [19]11, I guess it was, why it was just an old log house, it was the old Kidwell place I believe.

Evans: Oh, really?

Kielsgard: And it had been there for generations right before the Civil War. I'm sure.

Evans: And that was a log house?

Kielsgard: It was an old log house, that's right.

Evans: Do you know—

Kielsgard: It's no longer there now.

Evans: Okay. I was going to ask, do you know where Shirley's Gate actually was? Where the toll gate was?

Kielsgard: Shirley's Gate?

Evans: Yeah. I don't mean Shirley Gate Road because that has been moved and that originally led to the gate—

Kielsgard: Yeah, okay. Well the gate as I remember was right in front of Forest Hill Drive. Gentleman name of Mr. Cronk, Greenberry Cronk. (Laughter) He used to run that. That was his name. He used to run that.

Evans: That's lovely. Greenberry. Now I see—

Kielsgard: Cronk. C-r-o-n-k, I believe.

Evans: Yeah and that's in front of, that was in front of—

Kielsgard: Right in front of where Forest Hill Drive intersects with Lee Highway.

Evans: Okay. Because there is a Cronk on the 1879 map as having a house right about there.

Kielsgard: Yeah, that's right.

Evans: It might have been his father.

Kielsgard: He was the tollgate keeper there. Well I don't know, it could have been him because— maybe his father before him, but he was up in his eighties back in the early [19]20s so, you could see it could very easily be him.

Evans: Oh, yeah. Okay. Could have been.

Kielsgard: He and his wife both ran it.

Evans: Okay and—

Kielsgard: They had a—

Evans: They were still charging tolls?

Kielsgard: Yeah, I think so.

Evans: Ah.

Kielsgard: Yes, they were charging toll but I mean that was nothing in the [19]20s that was— prior to that, or early, maybe early [19]20s, I don't know but there was a toll gate there.

Evans: I'll bet that was Shirley Gate. That was the one that Mr. Shirley ran—

Kielsgard: Well Shirley Gate comes up this side of that and there's is right in front of the house. That I recall.

Evans: That's right. But see Shirley Gate Road used to be back farther according to the old land records, that's why. Shirley was the gatekeeper at one time.

Kielsgard: Oh, is that right?

Evans: Uh huh.

Kielsgard: Now, when was that?

Evans: Before the Civil War, he bought the land.

Kielsgard: It was?

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: It was?

Evans: Mhmm

Kielsgard: Well, that's interesting.

Evans: So.

Kielsgard: And alright now that's probably it because it probably came out right there.

Evans: Mhmm. That's right. And then they moved the road for whatever reason it's in the land records they say why they moved it so—

Kielsgard: Yeah. They supposedly cut road up there.

Evans: Yeah, mhmm. And then it was closer to Jermantown. But when you first lived on—

Kielsgard: I was born up on that hill, yeah.

Evans: You were born in what would had been the Kidwell log house?

Kielsgard: I think it was part of the Kidwell house.

Evans: And what was it like there then? Your father had twelve acres, did you grow—

Kielsgard: Well dad— he started out so many things, he raised things to sell on the market and then when he quit the market he had a number, he had raspberry passion. I remember it one time he had gooseberries and things like that which you don't normally see in Virginia currents but I don't think that lasted very long. I think something got in 'em. I don't think you're supposed to raise those in Virginia anymore. (Laughter) I haven't heard of 'em raising them since. But I know he had raspberries things like that, then picked them and then course they had all kinds of truck gardening things, you know, that they took into the market. And then later on, in the [19]20s, the early [19]20s, he also started the first commercial flock of leghorns, leghorn hands, you know for egg production?

Evans: Mhmm.

Kielsgard: I don't know of any large flocks he had to go to a thousand ends at the time I think there. But that also went by the board later on. He got busy with other things.

Evans: Yeah, that's—

Kielsgard: He [Inaudible] projects.

Evans: (Laughter) He can't do everything at once.

Kielsgard: No, that's right.

Evans: Well then were most of the people who lived along Lee Highway and they didn't call it that then because of course it wasn't Lee Highway until later—

Kielsgard: No, it was always known as Market Turnpike back in those days.

Evans: Right, and what was—

Kielsgard: And it was a dirt road. And they use to always tell me they had two— I can't recall that too well but there was two lanes of traffic. One was for the summertime was a smoother road and then they used one that got so full of water and rocks and things you know? That they had one a little higher (Laughter) that they used in the winter months.

Evans: Oh, yeah.

Kielsgard: And they dragged the roads. They didn't come and repair them. All they did was have a team of horses and a drag and they dragged the ruts. Those ruts up with dirt you know?

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: Smooth them out.

Evans: And then the drag was still out—

Kielsgard: Just hope it quit raining sometime so they can do it. (Laughter) And use the road again.

Evans: Well that was run by the county at that point probably wasn't?

Kielsgard: Yes, ma'am. I think so, yes. Lee Harvey(?). Mr. Dindlebeck, he use to have the team that dragged the horse. He had one or two teams, I think. It's D-i-n-d-l-e-b-e-c-k.

Evans: Now were there a lot of people living along the road in those days? That particular road?

Kielsgard: Well, not like there is today by any means. I mean there were, you know, houses here and there but not too many. In other words from Cronks, where the toll gate was, coming on down there wasn't anything prior to that— oh way

back in the early part of the century, I think somebody name of Jerman and I think Mr. Taylor use to have a slaughtering house over on the left between there and our Kielsgard subdivision. Subdivision my brother and I built after World War II and that was still an expansive undeveloped land in there and that is the headwaters of Difficult Run.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: There and up beyond that there was another place there was a spring that started Difficult Run. That was the dividing line everything on the south of that went in to Popes Head.

Evans: Oh, I was just seeing— now wait a minute, cause I need to get my boundaries straight. Your place was on— where you grew up, was on the southside of Warrenton Pike or Lee Highway?

Kielsgard: That's right. Yes, ma'am.

Evans: Now you're saying that the subdivision that you and your brother started was on—

Kielsgard: That was on the southside too.

Evans: That was on the southside too? In other words—

Kielsgard: Now slightly east of that and further south.

Evans: Oh—

Kielsgard: It was off the road, it wasn't on the road, it wasn't on the highway.

Evans: Then Difficult Run starts on the southside?

Kielsgard: On that property. It does. Yes ma'am.

Evans: Oh and not on the northside but the southside?

Kielsgard: That's correct.

Evans: Oh, okay.

Kielsgard: So there is a ridge line up there.

Evans: Mhmm

Kielsgard: That the water runs north. That's one, if not the only creek that goes directly due north, practically due north that's why they call it Difficult, I guess. (Laughter)

Evans: No, there is a funny story, I'll tell you sometime, not for this.

Kielsgard: [Inaudible]

Evans: Yeah, it's an apocryphal story about how Difficult Run started in— it had a long long Indian name supposedly in the 18th century and they wrote that down to Williamsburg. The surveyor sent it down and they wrote back and said that it's a very difficult name, that's—

Kielsgard: Oh is that why it is?

Evans: And that's why they called it Difficult Run ever since (Laughter). I don't know if that's true. (Laughter)

Kielsgard: Could be. Sounds reasonable

Evans: Yeah yeah. But it goes clear back into the 1700s at least. The name on the maps I could still see.

Kielsgard: Oh, okay.

Evans: But I noticed now then that what became the Lehmann property is on Difficult Run. That's something Mr. [John] Lally had told me.

Kielsgard: That's right yes, it's right near there. Yes.

Evans: There has been a house there, right back— for a long long time at least before the Civil War.

Kielsgard: [Inaudible]

Evans: Did you ever see the log house that Mr. Lally speaks about? Was that a log house when you first knew it when Mr. Harrison lived there?

Kielsgard: Well, I think most all those old houses began with logs. I mean the majority of them out in the area and then they just put clapboards over them—

Evans: True.

Kielsgard: Weatherboards. And sometimes it's difficult that you should get inside to see what the— I'm quite sure that was log—

Evans: At one time, well of course it could have burned down and another one been built on the same site.

Kielsgard: Uh huh, I see.

Evans: So this is— You see what I mean?

Kielsgard: But yeah I'm not sure about that because everybody I talked to they said they always knew that old house was there.

Evans: Mhmm

Kielsgard: You know? So I don't know, you know just when if it was rebuilt when. It would have to be quite a while back.

Evans: Oh, yes. Well it could have been. But as far as you know that was an old house.

Kielsgard: Mhmm. Yes, ma'am.

Evans: That might have gone back to before the Civil War.

Kielsgard: I think so.

Evans: But when you knew it it was covered with clapboard?

Kielsgard: I think as far I recall I believe it had the boards on it.

Evans: Now when Mr. Harrison died it was sold to Mr. Lehmann? And another Mr. Hyder—

Kielsgard: No, he— before Mr. Harrison died, he died in early [19]30s. Mr. Harrison died about 1943 or [194]4 and he was about 96 years old then. 96 or [9]7. And he told us a lot of tales. I think he was a boy band, he was a drummer boy in the Confederate Army.

Evans: Mr. Harrison?

Kielsgard: He claims to have seen General Jackson fall on his head.

Evans: Oh, up here? Oh no wait a minute that was in the Wilderness Chancellorsville.

Kielsgard: Chancellorsville.

Evans: Yeah, Chancellorsville.

Kielsgard: Of course he has been known to exaggerate a little. (Laughter) I think it's possible though because he was about that age. He was about 15 to 16 and they took them in at that age, the Confederate Army at that time. So it's very possible.

Evans: Well then Mr. Lehmann came over from Germany?

Kielsgard: Mhmm. Yes, I think so. His name was Walter L. Lehmann.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: And his wife's name was Ann.

Evans: Mhmm.

Kielsgard: And you probably have this information. And he was strictly German, I guess. But I use to work for him cutting the grass some and this and that. Let's see what else can I say?

Evans: Well you say he was strictly German, now do you mean he was very militaristic?

Kielsgard: Yes, well—

Evans: He was? Or—

Kielsgard: You know he had German traits in other words—

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: My ancestry is part German too. (Laughter) I'm familiar with some of those traits.

Evans: Yeah, rather rigid I think.

Kielsgard: Yeah right, definitely.

Evans: That's the way.

Kielsgard: But he had a nice cozy little place there. His favorite favorite watering place there. People come in get a beer. He had a nice fireplace in there, you know?

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: And it was a favorite spot.

Evans: Well.

Kielsgard: Locals as well as other people coming through.

Evans: Oh, it was? In other words it was a restaurant and a bar both?

Kielsgard: Yes, uh huh that's right.

Evans: And very popular?

Kielsgard: After prohibition, you know? After prohibition. [Inaudible]

Evans: Yes. That was what [19]32?

Kielsgard: I think it was.

Evans: Yeah. So, it was a very popular restaurant?

Kielsgard: Mhmm. Oh, yes.

Evans: And—

Kielsgard: There wasn't too many around during those days.

Evans: No.

Kielsgard: They had one at the Kamp Washington called Black Lantern Inn. Couple ladies ran that one. It was strictly tea and crumpets. I mean they didn't serve any alcoholic beverages, you know? So it didn't get to become as popular as Lehmann's Tavern. (Laughter)

Evans: I guess not—

Kielsgard: Different set. Different clientele, probably.

Evans: Yeah, I was going to ask you about that because— that's something I had heard about too but we shouldn't digress, I guess—

Kielsgard: No, I didn't mean to get off on that—

Evans: Oh, no.

Kielsgard: But I was just comparing one with the other.

Evans: Exactly. Well that was important— tell me something I was going to ask you. But now according to the land records Mr. Lehmann built tourist accommodations right away because he called it on the land records Lehmann's Tourist Camp or Court, I think.

Kielsgard: I think so, yes. He built those little houses around.

Evans: He did? Right away? Did a lot of people stop there?

Kielsgard: I think so. He had very good business.

Evans: Mhmm.

Kielsgard: Yeah. He had very good business.

Evans: When did tourist start coming down that road?

Kielsgard: Well, you see they put this concrete road in there. The convicts built that road. Wasn't private enterprise back then. They did it the cheaper way and they built that probably [19]22, [19]23, only took maybe two-three years to build it. And the convicts was camped right up there at Kamp Washington. Right above where Black Lantern Inn was, at the top. And that is when they started that rock quarry up at Centreville.

Evans: Mhmm.

Kielsgard: That's where they got the rock. [Inaudible]

Evans: For the highway?

Kielsgard: Yeah, and they had the rock down there. They had— I guess you would say blacks and mules there. But that was their thing of locomotion and I think they didn't have much in a way of machinery but it was mostly mule power (Laughter). And they moved a lot of dirt with it.

Evans: Mhmm, mhmm.

Kielsgard: Just a matter of numbers.

Evans: I have seen pictures of some of those early machines. They are very interesting.

Kielsgard: Mhmm. That's right. I don't know what they would've had. Now the mules, the carts they took the place of the bulldozers and other than they had a concrete— they had some kind of primitive concrete mixer there I think. That was about it but maybe a roller, I don't know may possibly be a roller or something like that. That was probably it. They didn't have all these dozens of motors and bulldozers and things they have nowadays.

Evans: When they paved it, did that change the character of the road much? As far as—

Kielsgard: Oh, that revolutionized everything when they paved it because heck when you stole liquor you split down that road. (Laughter)

Evans: Yeah, it actually wasn't as good from your standpoint, it was more of a hazard or probably from your mother's standpoint. (Laughter)

Kielsgard: Yeah, I had a little dog that got killed there.

Evans: Mmm.

Kielsgard: My mother died right after that. Right after. She died in [19]25. She was worse than [Inaudible]. It was just after [Inaudible]. I guess one whole year after it.

Evans: For goodness sake.

Kielsgard: We were living up there next to— where it's a restaurant now. My grandmother and grandfather built that house. It's a stone house now but they had they what's a frame house at the time. Whoever bought it put stone on the outside. But my grandmother and grandfather lived there and we was living with them after we sold the other place and they continued to live there until their death.

Evans: Is that where the Fisherman's restaurant— there is another tourist court very near?

Kielsgard: Yeah, that's right—

Evans: That's where you lived?

Kielsgard: Right this side of that. On the stone house.

Evans: On the stone house.

Kielsgard: Later on it was a kennel, where they'd board dogs.

Evans: Well, there were gas stations then too along the—

Kielsgard: Well they had a— now Manuel's these people had the— it was just start— it was just big bunch of woods in there right were the restaurant is now.

Evans: Mhmm.

Kielsgard: Well a [Inaudible] of the name Clarence Manuel came out there. He was a Corby freight driver, he retired and came out there and built a Sears house, see that house? That's a Sears-Roebuck house.

Evans: Where? Which one?

Kielsgard: The house with the restaurant there.

Evans: Is it?

Kielsgard: Yeah that was one of the few. Several of them around.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: The Sears and Roebuck house they sent all the stuff there and you put it together.

Evans: I know. Mr. Gibson has one.

Kielsgard: And they did real real well. They were very tight fisted. (Laughter) I use to work there too pumping gas. You had to pump it in those days. Now they talking about pumping gas all you do is push it. You take a hose and pull it like trigger you know? But in those days you had to work it up the line—

Evans: Oh, you really were pumping?

Kielsgard: Pump the oil up, the gas up and it came out and then you grabbed it. See there was a glass tube you know?

Evans: Yeah, I've seen it sure.

Kielsgard: That you filled up.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: Well you just filled how much you want and it'd come down and grab it. They had slot machines there too and that's where they drived a lot of profit.

Evans: Now there two houses— excuse me just occurred to me— where the restaurant is because I've been in there it's called the Fisherman's Restaurant now— there's a new owner. And there are two houses, one I think use to be the restaurant and one is the new one. Which one was the Sears house?

Kielsgard: Well there's only the one main restaurant there and it's right beside the house. This side of the house, that's where we lived. That was the residence. And I guess that's still a residence isn't?

Evans: It is.

Kielsgard: Yeah, well its only one restaurant there.

Evans: Yeah. So the house next to is the Sears house?

Kielsgard: That's right on the west side.

Evans: Yeah. Now then did Clarence Manuel built that tourist camp that was known as White's later?

Kielsgard: Well it was Manuel's first, Manuel's Tourist Camp I guess first. White got it years and years later. I mean after several other owners.

Evans: Oh, really?

Kielsgard: Well he didn't own it, I don't think. I think he just rented it. But that came later.

Evans: Oh, I see.

Kielsgard: Manuel sold out and went to Florida. That's where he died down there, way back I guess in the [19]30s or later in the [19]40s I guess.

Evans: And he was retired anyway when he got there so he must—

Kielsgard: That's right. He use to drive a Corby freight truck.

Evans: Corby, c-o-r-b-y?

Kielsgard: Uh huh that use to be the main freight company.

Evans: Okay, so he built a tourist camp. Did he have a restaurant there?

Kielsgard: Yeah. That's all of him. In house operation. Mrs. Manuel she provided the whole thing.

Evans: Oh. And then it had a gas station too?

Kielsgard: Right in front of it.

Evans: That was—

Kielsgard: Or right beside of it rather, it's beside of it. There was a overhanging thing and then the roof rests(?) you know like the pumps were beside it, right beside the road and all you had to do was go ahead inside.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: And they sold hamburgers and hot dogs and things like that. But mainly it was a— it had a lunch counter in there.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: And at those times that's what people use to do on Sunday afternoon they take a ride up the country, you know? Course you had the Warrenton horse races occasionally when you go up there, stop by there on the way back.

Evans: You see I was thinking Glen Alden [Motel] was another one, now was that the same era? Cause Mr. Lally said that was torn down before he ever got there in 1960.

Kielsgard: Glen Alden, you mean the restaurant?

Evans: Well was it a tourist camp too?

Kielsgard: No, that was just a restaurant I believe. That was up there a little farther.

Evans: Well tell me a little bit about the Black Lantern because that—

Kielsgard: Well—

Evans: That was a tourist— was that a camp also? Or was it just a restaurant?

Kielsgard: No, just a restaurant.

Evans: Just a restaurant.

Kielsgard: More of a tea house of that nature, you know?

Evans: I see.

Kielsgard: Now there was two ladies there that ran that. I can't recall their names.

Evans: Then they closed—

Kielsgard: Ms. Gale or Ms. Peacock. I can't recall, I'm not sure just who they were but I do remember them.

Evans: Gale and Peacock maybe?

Kielsgard: I can't remember. I mean it's possible but they were spinster ladies.

Evans: Mhmm.

Kielsgard: I don't recall.

Evans: Well then when they died maybe in the [19]40s or whenever that was no longer because—

Kielsgard: Someone named Mahorr(?) got it then I believe.

Evans: Ahh.

Kielsgard: Double r. He was real estate agent.

Evans: Oh, I see.

Kielsgard: Broker, I think—

Evans: Then what happened to Mr. Lehmann? Is this when— Mr. Young mentioned something about a certain amount of feeling about him because he was a German.

Kielsgard: Yeah, well that's right. He was a very— you know I don't know. I just cannot say what happened to him but I know there was— you know, everybody was suspect then especially if you had a strong accent and you started sticking up for Hitler.

Evans: Oh, dear. (Laughter) Did he?

Kielsgard: Oh, no. I think so. Oh, yes, they'd never [Inaudible] him like that. So I don't know what happen to him, frankly. See I was away from here and I was overseas for a good part during World War II— infantry, combat infantry. And I don't know whether he was here when I left or whether he somehow or another he took off while I was gone.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: I'm not sure. I left in [19]41 and came back [19]45 after the war.

Evans: So he could've been gone during that time but he wasn't here when you got back?

Kielsgard: I don't think so. Sometimes these things kind of close together you know I can't recall just exactly what I know but I don't think so.

Evans: Well I've been interested in these camps and how many people stopped there? Whether there were a lot of people going to Washington? What it was like?

Kielsgard: Well the touristy had just started to pick up when I left. I think because actually there wasn't any accommodations in most places and at the time they use to have— people use to rent out rooms in their homes, you see? That was before people did this on a large scale.

[Recording paused]

Evans: Yeah, that was very popular. That renting rooms in the home. I think in fact a lot of people liked to stop that way. That was less expensive than the tourist court even.

Kielsgard: That's right. Sometimes much better accommodations.

Evans: Yes, that was the lady who wrote this article in the [19]30s said. She and her friend had gone and always stopped. Who around here did that? Now I know that Mr., Mrs. Bowman's – Walker, the Walkers on the other side of Fairfax Circle what is now Arlington Boulevard.

Kielsgard: Oh yes.

Evans: I was told did that. Who on your section of Lee Highway rented rooms?

Kielsgard: I don't know if anybody there at Fairfax City itself. I think McClures used to do that. Mrs. McClure. And actually I don't know of anybody up our way that did it. I don't think there was anyone.

Evans: Where did Mrs. McClure live?

Kielsgard: Down on Main Street. That was just torn down now. I think it's down near Burke Road.

Evans: Near Burke Road?

Kielsgard: On Main Street. East of Fairfax City.

Evans: Yeah, yeah. Cause Burke Road is quite a ways east, isn't it?

Kielsgard: A couple of miles or so, I guess.

Evans: Well when people came up Lee Highway, wouldn't they go– they wouldn't get that far east would they?

Kielsgard: No, no. They would probably go to some town. They didn't have any places out in the country you know. Never heard of a tourist [Inaudible] in those days to speak of unless you got some village, some town and then they would probably go up to maybe Warrenton or something like that and then they would go and find something there. Of course they had hotels there.

Evans: Mhmm. But they–

Kielsgard: There just wasn't that many people traveling really. Usually they had what they called drummers. Now we call them salesman.

Evans: Yeah.

Kielsgard: Traveling salesman they were known as drummers back then and they would sometimes cover an area and they would have to stay overnight you know from one place to another. As far as just people going out traveling, frankly most of them might not do that in those days. They was too busy trying to make a living.

Evans: Well they didn't come to see the Capital you don't think that much?

Kielsgard: As far as I know they didn't. Not that much. I guess there were some that did. But they went to Washington and stayed in a motel there.

Evans: Well yeah.

Kielsgard: With the roads like they were you wouldn't go around back and forth twenty miles out to see the Capital. (Laughter)

Evans: You know that's what occurred to me when I first saw these older tourist camps from the very beginnings of the good highways. Nowadays people would go that far almost, but not then I wouldn't think. It would seem to me it would be a long way out.

Kielsgard: No, no. With the type of vehicles you had then. The only thing you had going for us you didn't have that much traffic. But then you wasn't always sure you'd be able to be getting where you planned to go either you know (Laughter). I remember when you use to have you'd drive every few miles you'd have a flat tire. You had to get out change the tire, pump it up, let everybody carry patches with them, they'd patch your tire. You didn't get any mileage at all on tires, on innertubes back then. And of course at the beginning of it— Well I have a picture of — I don't think I have it right here in front of me but my dad use to have trucks that had solid tires on it. You know with holes and all around.

Evans: I know they did because my father told me that his sister could patch a tire which I didn't know and I said so what and he said that was not easy, those were solid tires. So for a women to be able to do that was really unusual to change a tire.

Kielsgard: Right, right.

Evans: Well I can't think I guess of that much more about the life at that time that I particularly wanted to ask you now. But I really appreciate your talking about this.

Kielsgard: Oh, you're very welcome. If I can be of any further help to you just let me know.

Evans: Alright will do. Thank you.

Kielsgard: Alright.

[end of transcription]

Transcribed by Johana Flores, April 2020